
THE ONLINE HOME OF THE WYOMING
LEGISLATURE

EXPLANATION OF BUDGET PROCESS

Appropriating public funds for the operation of state government is perhaps the single most important task facing Wyoming Legislators. The following provides a brief introduction to the state budget process including an explanation of the operations of the Consensus Revenue Estimating Group (CREG) and the Legislature's Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC).

Budget Process

Budget Period.

The State of Wyoming operates on a biennial budget for all executive and judicial branch agencies, including the University, the community colleges, and for state funding for K-12 education. That is, budgets are built for two fiscal years of operations. The fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends on the following June 30. Budget requests are prepared by agency fiscal personnel in conjunction with the Budget Division of the Department of Administration and Information. The Budget Division is the central budget office for all state government and is often referred to as the "Governor's budget office".

The budget period for the Legislature itself is different in that it is tailored to coincide with the two calendar years for which each Legislature serves.

Standard and Exception/Expanded Budget Requests.

The biennial budget process begins during the summer months prior to a budget session of the Legislature. The Budget Division prepares a "standard" budget request for each agency and submits the standard budget to the agency in July. The standard budget is roughly equivalent to what the agency had received for the prior biennium with adjustments made for legislatively or executive approved transfers of funds into or out of an agency's budget.

The agency then may develop an "exception/expanded" budget request. An exception/expanded request asks for increased funding necessary to maintain current levels of service, to transfer funds and positions from one program within an agency to another, or for increased funding for expanding services to a new group of recipients or for expanding a new service to existing recipients. Not all agencies submit exception/expanded requests, the only required request is the standard. This request is for the upcoming two fiscal years or biennium which will begin on July 1 following the budget session.

Governor's Budget Recommendations.

The entire budget request from each agency is presented to the Budget Division in September or October. The Budget Division then assembles all of the agency requests into a total package for the Governor's review. (The budget requests for the Legislative and Judicial branches of state government are not submitted for the Governor's review and recommendation.)

The Consensus Revenue Estimating Group (CREG) (CREG is explained in detail elsewhere on this web site) meets in October and develops revenue forecasts for the upcoming biennium and the Governor compares the budget request to the forecasted revenue and works with the Budget Division to prepare his budget recommendations to the Legislature. These recommendations must be provided to the Legislature by December 1 of each year.

Supplemental Budget Requests.

In the event an agency believes it needs additional funding once the Legislature has approved a biennial budget, it prepares a supplemental budget request in the summer months prior to a general session of the Legislature. The process and time table is the same as that of a biennial budget request. The only difference is that there is no standard or exception/expanded requests in a supplemental budget request, only a request for funds in addition to what was approved in the budget session.

In the event an agency needs funds in addition to the biennial and supplemental appropriations to make it through a biennium, an "effective immediate" budget request is made. These requests come during budget session, but "effective immediate" appropriations are made in order for an agency to finish the current biennium, not for the upcoming biennium.

Budget Process - Joint Appropriations Committee

Staff Analysis.

Once the Governor's budget recommendations are received, LSO budget/fiscal staff begin to analyze the request and compile "detailed reports" which help the JAC review agency requests; and "summary reports" of the total request and forecasted revenues to give the Committee an idea of the "big picture."

JAC Budget Hearings.

The Committee begins agency biennial budget hearings in December or early January prior to the budget session. The JAC meets periodically in blocks of 1 or 2 weeks until the budget session starts. During a general session, agency supplemental budget hearings are held during the session at JAC meetings.

The usual format for agency budget hearings are a lead-off presentation by the agency or department head on overall agency achievements, goals and requirements followed by a more detailed explanation of the agency's budget request. During this time the Committee asks questions but takes no formal action. It is simply an information exchange.

Once hearings for all agencies are completed, the Committee begins to "work" budgets. During this time the Committee works through each agency's budget, program by program, with individual Committee members making specific recommendations to either approve, deny or adjust an agency's funding request. The Committee discusses and votes on each recommendation. Whether there are recommended changes or not, the Committee votes on each program or sub-program budget request for each agency.

The entire budget hearing/budget working process takes 4 or 5 weeks and is completed at least one week before the budget session begins.

Preparation of Budget Bills.

Once the Committee has completed its work on the budgets, the LSO budget/fiscal staff prepares two identical general appropriations or budget bills for introduction. One bill is a Senate file, the other a House bill. Each bill consists of the JAC's recommendations as approved by vote of the Committee.

The co-chairmen assign different portions of each bill to different Committee members for explanation of the Committee's action on the floor of each house. While there are two identical bills started, only one bill which encompasses the action from both houses is dealt with by conference committee and is passed into law.

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Wyoming "Mirror" Budget Process
(excerpt from the 2013-2014 Joint Rules)

Joint Rule 14. BUDGET BILLS

14-1 (a) Except for emergency appropriations which may be contained in a separate bill, an identical bill for the entire state budget shall be introduced in both the Senate and the House as identical or "mirror" budget bills. Only one (1) of the introduced mirror bills shall be enacted into law. This rule applies to the supplemental budget bill in the same manner as the bill for the entire state budget.

(b) (1) During committee of the whole, second reading or third reading of a mirror budget bill, each section of the bill or portion of a section, including any amendments to that section or portion of a section, shall be considered only once during that reading even though that reading may be extended beyond one (1) day. For the purpose of this subsection, a section of the bill means a separately numbered section dealing with an agency's budget or a complete, separate numbered section, such as a "Section 200". A portion of a section means a separately listed line item within that section. The sequence in which the sections of the budget bills are considered shall be the same for both houses.

(2) Following introduction in the first house, the mirror budget bill shall be referred to the committee of the whole.

(3) Notwithstanding Senate Rule 7-8 and House Rule 7-9, third reading of a mirror budget bill in the first house shall be conducted on the second legislative working day following the day second reading is completed.

(c) An amendment may refer to or affect a section or portion of a section of the bill previously considered on the same reading when it is necessary for conformance or when it is essential to the intent of the amendment to the section under consideration. Any amendment which deals with a section that was previously considered on the same reading is not divisible as to that previously considered section.

(d) Notwithstanding House Rule 7-11 or Joint Rule 4- 1, upon passage by the house of origin, a mirror budget bill shall be delivered directly to the second house for action without engrossing, but shall be accompanied by amendments adopted by the first house. A bill so delivered to, and in the possession of, the second house shall not be recalled for further action by the first house without the consent of the second house.

(e) (1) When a mirror budget bill has passed the house of origin, the bill shall be referred to the standing appropriations committee of the second house. The standing committee shall identify amendments from the house of origin which are identical to amendments adopted by the second house with respect to its own mirror budget bill. The standing committee shall submit a list of those amendments so identified to the second house. No action shall be taken regarding this list.

(2) As to all other amendments from the house of origin, the committee shall provide a list of them in the committee's report, but shall not recommend adoption or rejection and shall not propose any modifications to those amendments. It shall be out of order for the standing appropriations committee to propose any other amendment to the mirror budget bill.

(f) (1) Notwithstanding Senate Rules 7-1 and 6-1, House Rules 7-1 and 6-1, and any other rule to the contrary, the mirror budget bill passed by the house of origin shall, after the standing appropriations committee of the second house has reported the bill back to the second house, be placed and considered by the second house on third reading. Each amendment on the list specified in paragraph (e)(2) of this rule in the standing committee report from the house of origin shall be explained on the floor by a member of the appropriations committee designated by the chairman.

Consideration on third reading in the second house of the mirror budget bill passing the house of origin shall be limited to an explanation of, or, at the direction of the presiding officer, a non-binding ("straw poll") vote regarding each of the amendments adopted by the house of origin which are not identical to amendments adopted by the second house on its own mirror budget bill. Any other amendment shall be out of order. If a "straw poll" vote is taken, Senate Rule 8-1(a) and House Rule 8-1 do not apply to debate on amendments to the mirror budget bill being considered on third reading in the second house to the extent those rules limit members to speaking no more than twice on the same issue. Third reading may be extended beyond one (1) day to consecutive days to permit explanation of, or "straw poll votes" on amendments. Non-binding ("straw poll") votes shall be taken by roll call only at the direction of the presiding officer. The purpose of these "straw poll" votes are solely to provide non-

binding guidance to members of the conference committee from the house in its deliberations on developing a conference committee report.

(g) After all third reading amendments have been considered, no third reading vote will be taken, and the bill shall not be sent back to the house of origin for concurrence. Rather, both mirror budget bills will be immediately referred to the same joint conference committee appointed by the presiding officers of both houses.

(h) Notwithstanding Senate Rule 2-9, House Rule 2-5 or Joint Rules 2-1 through 2-3, the following rules shall govern joint conference committee action on mirror budget bills:

(1) Both mirror budget bills shall be referred to a single joint conference committee on the budget as soon as third reading in the second house is completed;

(2) The presiding officers of each house shall, in accordance with these rules and "Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure," appoint a conference committee of five (5) to confer on the two mirror budget bills. A majority of each conference committee shall be appointed from the prevailing side on the vote for third reading and final passage of the mirror budget bill originating in that house. During the Budget Session, the chairmanship of any joint conference committee on the mirror budget bills shall alternate between the house and Senate for each day the joint conference committee meets with the Senate having the chairmanship on the first meeting day;

(3) The first joint conference committee appointed is not a free committee, but each successive committee appointed thereafter shall be a free conference committee as defined in Section 773 of "Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure";

(4) The joint conference committee shall consider and dispose of each adopted Senate amendment to the Senate mirror budget bill and each adopted House amendment to the House mirror budget bill. Only one (1) report shall be submitted for both mirror budget bills and only one (1) of the two (2) mirror budget bills referred to the committee shall be reported back to both houses. The mirror budget bill not reported back to both houses shall be regarded as automatically tabled;

(5) The signed joint conference committee report shall be simultaneously referred to both houses for concurrence.

(j) Notwithstanding Senate Rule 12-10, House Rule 12-11 or Part II (3) of the Wyoming Manual of Legislative Procedures, a motion for reconsideration of a vote on a mirror budget bill shall be in order only on the same day that the original vote was taken and only if the bill is still in the possession of that house. The vote on the motion to reconsider shall be taken no later than the last item of business on the day of the original vote. If a vote to reconsider has passed or failed on a motion under this subsection, it shall not be in order to move to rescind the vote on that motion.

(k) In the event one house fails to pass on third reading the mirror budget bill originally introduced in that house, the following shall apply:

(1) The mirror budget bill passed in the opposite house shall be engrossed with all amendments passed by that house and shall be delivered to the second house. That bill shall thereafter be referred to as the "state budget bill" and shall be deemed to be the budget bill for the state budget for all purposes.

(2) Subsections 14-1(b) and (c) of this rule shall apply to consideration of the state budget bill in the second house.

(3) Notwithstanding Senate Rule 2-9, House Rule 2-5 or Joint Rules 2-1 through 2-3, the following rules shall govern joint conference committee action on the state budget bill:

(a) The presiding officers of each house shall, in accordance with these rules and "Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure," appoint a conference committee of five (5) to confer on the state budget bill. A majority of each conference committee shall be appointed from the prevailing side on the vote for third reading and final passage of the bill. During the Budget Session, the chairmanship of any joint conference committee on the state budget bill shall alternate between the house and Senate for each day the joint conference committee meets with the Senate having the chairmanship on the first meeting day;

(b) The first joint conference committee appointed is not a free committee, but each successive committee appointed thereafter shall be a free conference committee as defined in Section 773 of "Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure";

(c) The signed joint conference committee report shall be simultaneously referred to both houses for concurrence.

(4) Except as otherwise provided in Joint Rule 14-1(k)(2), the provisions of Joint Rule 14-1(a) through (j) shall not apply to the state budget bill.

(m) Amendments to Mirror Budget Bills.

(1) It shall be out of order to propose an amendment to a mirror budget bill during committee of the whole consideration in the first house.

(2) Except as provided in Joint Rule 14-1(m)(3), no amendment shall be considered on second or third reading of a mirror budget bill in the first house unless the amendment has been submitted to the legislative staff for preparation not later than 5:00 p.m. on the legislative working day preceding the day of the reading.

(3) Only the following amendments shall be submitted to the legislative staff for preparation on the day third reading of a mirror budget bill is to begin in the first house:

(A) Amendments to correct errors in previously adopted amendments; and

(B) Amendments sponsored by the chairman the standing appropriations committee or his designee.

Wyoming Legislative Service Office

Daily Committee Meetings Days 1-20 2014 Budget Session

1st	Monday	2/10/2014	<u>House</u>	<u>Senate</u>
2nd	Tuesday	2/11/2014	<u>House</u>	<u>Senate</u>
3rd	Wednesday	2/12/2014		<u>Senate</u>
4th	Thursday	2/13/2014		
5th	Friday	2/14/2014		
6th	Monday	2/17/2014		
7th	Tuesday	2/18/2014		
8th	Wednesday	2/19/2014		
9th	Thursday	2/20/2014		
10th	Friday	2/21/2014		
11th	Monday	2/24/2014		
12th	Tuesday	2/25/2014		
13th	Wednesday	2/26/2014		
14th	Thursday	2/27/2014		
15th	Friday	2/28/2014		
16th	Monday	3/03/2014		
17th	Tuesday	3/04/2014		
18th	Wednesday	3/05/2014		
19th	Thursday	3/06/2014		
20th	Friday	3/07/2014		

Each Standing Committee of the House and Senate has established a Standard Schedule for meetings to be held by the Committee during the 2014 Budget Session. Note: This is a flexible schedule showing the typical times when each Committee meets during the week. The Committees may or may not meet at these times or may schedule a different meeting time depending upon workload.

To determine if a Standing Committee has scheduled a meeting for a particular day of the Session, please check the Daily Committee Meetings schedule to the left. Note: meeting notices typically are not posted until late afternoon of the day prior to the Committee meeting.

Standard Meeting Schedule for Standing Committees During 2014 Budget Session

Senate:

- #1 Judiciary (Room S1): Mon - Wed - Fri morning
- #2 Appropriations (Room 204 or S11): Mon-Wed-Fri Noon Recess, Tue & Thu morning
- #3 Revenue (Room S16): Tue & Thu noon recess
- #4 Education (Room S13): Mon-Wed-Fri morning
- #5 Agriculture (Room S15): Tue & Thu upon afternoon adjournment
- #6 Travel (Room S14): Tue & Thu morning
- #7 Corporations (Room S19): Tue & Thu morning
- #8 Transportation (Room S14): Mon-Wed-Fri upon afternoon adjournment
- #9 Minerals (Room S18): Mon-Wed-Fri noon recess
- #10 Labor (Room S20): Mon-Wed-Fri morning

House:

- #1 Judiciary (Room H8): Tue & Thu upon afternoon adjournment
- #2 Appropriations: Upon call of the chairman
- #3 Revenue (Room H11): Mon-Wed-Fri morning
- #4 Education (Room H10): Mon & Wed upon afternoon adjournment, Fri noon recess
- #5 Agriculture (Room H11): Tue & Thu morning
- #6 Travel (Room H10): Mon-Wed-Fri morning
- #7 Corporations (Room H18): Mon - Tue - Thu noon recess

- #8 Transportation Room H17): Tue & Thu upon afternoon adjournment
 - #9 Minerals (Room H18): Mon-Wed-Fri morning
 - #10 Labor (Room H17): Mon & Wed upon afternoon adjournment, Fri noon recess, Tue & Thu morning (call of the chair)
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